

APTAC Body of Knowledge Competency Guide

F. Communication Skills

F.3 Presentation and Public Speaking Skills

DESCRIPTION

Public speaking is often noted as one of our greatest fears; but whether in a one-to-one setting or to a full auditorium, each of us can master skills and techniques that make public speaking a positive experience for both the audience and the presenter. Time tested techniques include:

- Prepare before you take the stage
 - Sleep well the night before
 - Eat well enough so you don't feel faint; eschew alcohol and too much caffeine
 - Arrive in plenty of time so you don't feel hurried
- Look the part
 - Dress appropriately for the event, and it is okay to over dress. Have a *Presence*.
 - Audiences want to hear from experts. Don't come across like one-of-the-guys. Start by giving them their money's worth (even if it is free). You can relax later.
- Know what you are going to say
 - Have a reason for speaking (Presentation Purpose) and reasons the audience should listen (Learning Objectives); then put it in your notes first
 - Organize your thoughts from start to finish. Always think of your presentation in three parts: Beginning, Middle, End or Intro, Body, Conclusion
 - Have an *Attention Step* to begin. Good *Transitions* that flow point-to-point. A "*Get-off-the-Stage*" slide and comments for definite closure
 - Rehearse your materiel so you know your place; Practice, Practice, Practice
- Pace the presentation—don't speak too fast, or too slow, or too long
 - Always leave room for questions—even if none are anticipated
 - Expect your adrenalin to cause you to talk fast so remind yourself to slow down
 - Appoint a timekeeper—it creates audience participation and keeps you honest
- Eliminate your bad habits—everyone has them, but with practice you can mitigate them
 - Do Move but Don't Pace back and forth—it's annoying to the audience
 - Don't say Uhhmmmm too often—be silent, then go on
 - Make eye contact—even if you focus on a chair between two people
 - Talk to the audience and not to the slides; don't turn your back, don't read the slides. One trick is having your laptop facing where you can see the slides and face audience at the same time.
 - Use voice inflection—monotone can put people to sleep
- Visual aids are good—when used effectively
 - Keep them simple so they minimize potential failure
 - Keep them relevant to the point you are making

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- Materiel on slides are key points not a script
- Using white boards or flip charts should be practiced
- Attention tools—use variety as you present
 - Ask questions—pose questions to the audience then answer them yourself
 - Verbal or visual humor works if done well and doesn't offend
 - Quote experts—but don't overuse it. They can add credibility
 - Shout or Whisper—they'll listen closer
 - Step out at, or in to, the audience—as you get close they'll wake up
- Have a handout—it keeps their attention when their minds wonder
 - Nothing extensive; it can be a one page note sheet with abbreviated outline
 - Give them whole presentation, in some form, when subject matter is detailed
 - Consider a “Word Search” puzzle created with the presentation high points
- Be prepared for the worst
 - Bring your own presentation materiel: flash drive + laptop + handouts + disc + portable projector + extension cords. Better safe than sorry.
 - With or without slides; sometimes equipment craps out, have an impromptu capability
- Gain experience at every opportunity—skills improve with practice
 - Speak to large or small groups whenever possible
 - Be the one who asks questions when you are in the audience
 - Volunteer to speak when no one else does; you won't do any worse

Remember, the audience is there because they want to hear what you have to say, and expect to learn something new. Give it to them. Be the expert. They'll listen closely for the first 5 minutes and then politely thereafter. When you close, they'll perk up again. Therefore, make it easy for them from start to finish. The old fashioned, “Tell them what you're going to tell them, Tell them, then Tell them what you told them” still works. Give them the learning points they came to hear and leave nothing to doubt. They'll be pleased they came and you'll be pleased they listened

There are many books, courses and free websites that can help improve your public speaking talent but nothing replaces experience.

Part B: Reference material you might review

Toastmasters International: <http://www.toastmasters.org/>, <http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.asp>

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“Don’t just lecture me, teach me something”:

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/higher-education-dont-just-lecture-me-teach-me-something-eric-macfarlane-sympathises-with-undergraduates-complaints-1475098.html>

Making a Word Search: <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/WordSearchSetupForm.asp>

Lesson Planning: http://www.ehow.com/how_2077430_set-objectives-lesson-plan.html